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SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION UPDATE

REF: A) BAGHDAD 877 B) BAGHDAD 69

Classified By: Ambassador Lawrence Benedict for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary and introduction: Following on the heels of a flurry of anti-corruption activity by the Government of Iraq (GOI) over the past three months - the GOI's first conference on Anti-Corruption (AC) in January, and a second conference in mid-March hosted jointly by UNDP and the World Bank that was attended by UN Undersecretary Antonio Costa, UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ambassador Lawrence Benedict arrived in Baghdad to assume his post as the Mission's Coordinator for Anti-Corruption Initiatives on March 30 and began meeting with GOI officials concerned with anti corruption activities. Amb Benedict met with several GOI officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih (septel), Commissioner on Integrity Judge Rahim Al Ugali, and Chairman of the Council of Representatives Committee on Integrity Sheikh Sabah Al-Saidi to follow-up on issues discussed in both forums. End summary.

Highlights from Anti-Corruption Coordinator's meetings with senior GOI officials

¶2. (C) ACC met first with Commissioner of Integrity (COI) Judge Rahim Al Ugali. Having recently been appointed to his position with the COI, Judge Ugali expressed interest broadening the activities of the COI to include more attention to the areas of public education and transparency and also acknowledged that the COI had a lot of work to do to repair the damage done to public perceptions of the COI by his predecessors. In addition, Judge Ugali said he has been involved in drafting two laws, one for the COI and one for the Inspectors General (IGs), which lay out the roles and responsibilities of the two respective institutions. This is of particular importance because in clarifying their respective roles, the laws should facilitate better cooperation between the COI and the IGs. A new law for the Board of Supreme Audit (BSA) was not mentioned.

¶3. (C) ACC also met with Sheikh Sabah Al-Saidi, Chairman of the Council of Representatives Committee on Integrity. Al-Saidi, whose relationship with the Embassy has evolved into one of collaboration and friendship, warmly welcomed the ACC and engaged in a wide-ranging and lengthy discussion which covered the anti-corruption waterfront. Among the highlights were an invitation to meet with the heads of the anti-corruption agencies (BSA, COI and the IGs) in Sheikh Sabah's office, multiple references to America and the Embassy as "our partner", a barely veiled request for an invitation to the Embassy and a request for training for training for the staff for his committee. On the later point, the ACC promised to carefully study this request for training. Al-Saidi volunteered that he had a good working relationship with the new Commissioner for the Commission on Integrity and said his relationship with the other two anti-corruption agencies, the Supreme Board of Audit, and the

Inspectors General was good as well.

¶4. (U) In the wake of the mid-March meeting there was some confusion about the status of Iraq's instrument of ratification for the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). As it turns out the instrument was deposited with the UNDOC in Vienna during the Baghdad conference on March

¶17. Thus the UNCAC will enter into force for Iraq on April

¶16.

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